ACADEMIC COUNCIL Minutes April 2, 2026

Present: Leslie Griffin, Joe Childs, Vicki Bingham, Fawn Ussery, Merideth Van Namen, Kristen Land, Tammy Prather, Jeffrey Leffler, Heather Miller, Peter Dean
Absent: None

Guests: None

Call to order: The Academic Council met in the Janice Wyatt Conference Room KWH on April 2, 2026. The meeting convened at 8:30 AM, with Provost Leslie Griffin presiding.

Agenda item	Comments/Discussion	Action taken	Responsible party
Approval of Agenda:	Dr. Griffin began the meeting by asking for a motion to approve the agenda. The motion to approve the agenda was made by Dr. Vicki Bingham which was seconded by Fawn Ussery. All were in favor. A motion to amend the agenda to add Provost and Faculty Senate updates was made by Dr. Leslie Griffin which was seconded by Dr. Merideth Van Namen. All were in favor.	**Approved**	**Leslie Griffin**
Approval of Minutes:	The motion to approve minutes for Thursday, March 5th and Wednesday, March 18th was made by Dr. Vicki Bingham and seconded by Fawn Ussery. All in favor.	**Approved**	**Leslie Griffin**
Discussion Items			
Provost's Updates	**<u>Provost, Dr. Leslie Griffin, provided the following updates:</u>** • Provost Griffin shared some key initiatives that have been discussed at recent CAO meetings and let everyone know to expect additional follow-up communication to come as updates are available. • She has organized a group led by Wayne Francis, AI Strategist from Mississippi Gulf Coast Community College, to evaluate tools that support faculty in identifying and addressing AI use. The group will also develop guidance language for inclusion in course syllabi.		**Leslie Griffin**

Prepared by Jeffrey Leffler, 4/8/2026

	• Commencement will follow a revised format this year, with four separate ceremonies. Academic Deans were asked to determine faculty participation for each ceremony.		
Faculty Senate	**Faculty Senate President, Peter Dean, provided the following update:** • Peter Dean reported that the Faculty Senate would have an executive council meeting today. • Peter Dean and Dr. Jon Westfall are participating in a task force formed by the Faculty Senate Association of Mississippi to study faculty pay. This began with a focus on adjunct faculty pay but has expanded to all faculty groups. • Peter shared that the next Academic Council meeting will be his last as Dr. Jon Westfall will take over as Faculty Senate President.		**Peter Dean**
Action Items: **New Business** **Policies and Forms**			
Curriculum/Course Actions	**<u>Curriculum Action: General Education Catalog Entry (Second Reading)</u>** • Dr. Jeffrey Leffler presented revisions to the General Education Catalog Entry based on feedback from the first reading. These revisions include grouping philosophy with the history courses in the humanities and artistic expression category and adding the word "or" between the microeconomics and macroeconomics courses. • In discussion, Drs. Bingham, Childs, and Van Namen each expressed concerns regarding the wording of some of the competencies and the wording for the choice between history and literature courses in the humanities section be made more clear that the student could choose any combination of history and literature courses as long as they had two courses in one or both of those areas beyond the required artistic expression course. • Proposed actions include: o **Approval of red-lined changes to the undergraduate catalog pending the revision of the wording of the identified competencies and a more clear statement that students may choose any combination of courses in the history and literature sections to satisfy two of the three courses required in the humanities category.**	**Passed**	**Jeffrey Leffler**

	A motion was made by Dr. Jeffrey Leffler to approve the action and was seconded by Dr. Joe Childs. All in Favor		
	<u>Curriculum Action: Remedial/Intermediate Task Force</u> • Dr. Jeffrey Leffler shared a proposal from the Remedial/Intermediate Task Force. • Proposed actions include: o **Implement multiple-measures placement model using ACT/Accuplacer criteria: English ≤16 or <255; Math ≤17 or <247 or ACT 15+ with approved transitional math (≥80); Reading <16 or <255** o **Replace remedial courses with credit-bearing co-requisite pathways** o **Launch ENG 101 + ENG 104 co-requisite model** o **Cap sections and embed diagnostic screening with targeted support** o **Default eligible students to MAT 103 or MAT 115 pathways** o **Add 1-credit math support co-requisite** o **Implement yearlong College Algebra sequence for underprepared students with majors requiring College Algebra** o **Develop internal math placement diagnostic** o **Create CRD 199 credit-bearing disciplinary literacy course** o **Develop yearlong, cohort-based First-Year Seminar (FYS)** o **Create second 8-week personal development course for at-risk students** **A motion was made by Dr. Jeffrey Leffler to approve the action pending creation of the required new course and was seconded by Dr. Vicki Bingham. All in Favor.**	**Passed**	**Jeffrey Leffler**
Policy Actions:	**<u>Policy Action: Graduate Course Repetition and Grade Replacement (First Reading)</u>** • Dr. Jeffrey Leffler shared proposed revisions to the Graduate Course Repetition and Grade Replacement policy. The revisions reflect the new organizational structure and the addition of an explicit statement that grade replacement cannot be applied after the degree is awarded. **A motion was made by Dr. Jeffrey Leffler to approve the action and was seconded by**	**Passed**	**Jeffrey Leffler**

	Dr. Vicki Bingham. All in Favor.		
	<u>Policy Action: Graduate Dismissal (Second Reading)</u> • Dr. Jeffrey Leffler shared a proposed revision to the Graduate Catalog to change the policy to allow a pathway for students to be readmitted after dismissal from a graduate program. The new policy allows a student to be considered for readmission after a three-year period has passed and the student successfully completes a minimum of six hours of graduate study as a non-degree seeking student with a minimum grade of "B." • Proposed actions include: o **Red-lined changes to the Graduate Catalog to reflect the new pathway to readmission.** **A motion was made by Dr. Jeffrey Leffler to approve the action and was seconded by Dr. Vicki Bingham. All in Favor.**	**Passed**	**Jeffrey Leffler**
	<u>Policy Action: Instructional Resources (First Reading)</u> • Dr. Jeffrey Leffler shared a proposed revision to the Instructional Resources policy. • Proposed actions include: o **Red-lined changes to the policy to reflect the current procedures and practices.** • Discussion included needing more time to determine how the policy should appropriately reflect accessibility requirements and to include definitions for all concepts presented in the policy statement. The action will be brought forward again at a future meeting. **Tabled**	**Tabled**	**Jeffrey Leffler**

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	Policy Action: Release of Information (First Reading) • Dr. Jeffrey Leffler shared a proposed revision to the Release of Information policy. • Proposed actions include: o **Red-lined changes to the policy to include general edits, the current organizational structure, and an update to the federal office that administers the related law.** **A motion was made by Dr. Jeffrey Leffler to approve the actions and was seconded by Dr. Merideth Van Namen. All in Favor.**	**Passed**	**Jeffrey Leffler**
	Policy Action: Class Absences and Excuses (First Reading) • Dr. Jeffrey Leffler shared a proposed revision to the Class Attendance and Excuses policy. • Discussion included revising the words "are encourages" should be edited to "are encouraged" in the second to last line in the first paragraph under the heading "Health Absences." • Proposed actions include: o **Red-lined changes to the policy to include general edits and the current organizational structure.** **A motion was made by Dr. Jeffrey Leffler to approve the actions pending a revision and was seconded by Peter Dean. All in Favor.**	**Passed**	**Jeffrey Leffler**
	Policy Action: Class Attendance (First Reading) • Dr. Jeffrey Leffler shared a proposed revision to the Class Attendance policy. • Discussion included changing the reference to the Weather Bureau to the appropriate current responsible organization. • Proposed actions include: o **Red-lined changes to the policy to include general edits, the current organizational structure, and alignment with federal requirements.** **A motion was made by Dr. Jeffrey Leffler to approve the actions and was seconded**	**Passed**	**Jeffrey Leffler**

	by Tammy Prather. All in Favor.		
	Policy Action: Faculty Positions (First Reading) • Dr. Jeffrey Leffler shared a proposed revision to the Faculty Positions policy. • Discussion included needing more time to consider. The action will be brought forward again at a future meeting. • Proposed actions include: • **Red-lined changes to update the policy statement and to tie the policy to the University mission, disciplinary standards, and accrediting expectations and make a clear distinction between ranked faculty and titled faculty.** **Tabled**	**Tabled**	**Jeffrey Leffler**
Discussion	• **Canvas syllabus assignment template (Student Learning):** Kristen Land shared a proposal to create a syllabus assignment in the Canvas template for all courses to verify meaningful week-one student participation. The proposal includes a pilot in Summer with full Fall rollout; Kristen to coordinate with Heather and Kelly and share with deans for implementation input • **Expanded course descriptions (Student Government Association): Dr. Griffin presented a** request from the Student Government Association to enhance Banner course descriptions to better communicate course activities and outcomes; to be explored with OIT • **Mid-term evaluations:** Dr. Griffin also shared that a SGA resolution that had been previously presented was referred to Faculty Senate which included concerns about the feasibility of the proposal as a fixed policy suggesting a more flexible format; Dr. Griffin requested a working group to study its potential use as a formative assessment tool for continuous course improvement**.**		**Leslie Griffin**
Announcements:	Easter Holiday | April 2, 5pm – April 5, 2026 Academic Research Showcase | April 9, 2026 Final Exams | May 4-7, 2026 Graduate Commencement | May 7, 2026 | 4:00 PM, Bologna Performing Arts Center COBA Commencement | May 8, 2026 | 9:00 AM, Bologna Performing Arts Center		

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	CEAH Commencement | May 8, 2026 | 11:00 AM, Bologna Performing Arts Center CNHS Commencement | May 8, 2026 | 2:00 PM, Bologna Performing Arts Center Final Grades Due | May 11, 2026 | Noon		
Adjourned:	11:52 a.m.		
Next Meeting:	• Next Meeting Date: Thursday, April 9, 2026, 8:30 am in the Janice Wyatt Conference Room • Upcoming Meeting Date: Thursday, May 7, 2026, 8:30 am in the Janice Wyatt Conference Room		

Prepared by Jeffrey Leffler, 4/8/2026